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Twenty-Ninth Report

COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE VIETNAM AND LAOS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

(This report covers the period from
5 September through 11 September 1973)

*This memorandum has been prepared jointly by the
Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.*

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24

12 September 1973
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12 September 1973

Twenty-Ninth Report

COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS OF THE VIETNAM AND LAOS
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS*

(This report covers the week from
5 September through 11 September 1973)

The Key Points

- No new infiltration of combat troops from North Vietnam was detected during the week, but an estimated 50 specialists were noted moving southward.
- Redeployments of two logistics regiments from South Vietnam to Laos are underway, and three other transportation regiments within South Vietnam have been ordered to redeploy--destinations unknown.
- Typhoon rains have virtually halted all logistic movements in the North Vietnamese and Lao Panhandles, but logistic activity in northern South Vietnam remained brisk.
- Recent developments support the conclusion that the Communists again intend to mount a major transportation effort in Laos during the coming dry season.
- Recent evidence indicates that there was an increase in North Vietnamese military conscription during August.
- Combat activity was at a moderate level in South Vietnam and remained at a low level in Laos during the week.

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

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The Details

NOTE: This is the twenty-ninth in a series of memoranda summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military materiel toward and into South Vietnam, (II) Communist-initiated combat activity in violation of the Vietnam and Laos settlement agreements, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina. As with previous issues, we have prepared sections I and II of this memorandum in sterilized form in order to minimize the risk of source exposure if parts of the memorandum are used outside U.S. Government channels. For U.S. eyes only, we have appended a listing of specific sources to sections I and II at ANNEX A. Section III of the report has not been sterilized. Its contents should be held within the U.S. Government, and within the proper channels for material so classified.

I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese Personnel and Military Supplies

A. Personnel Infiltration and Redeployments

1. No new combat groups were observed infiltrating southward from North Vietnam during the reporting period. Two small, special-purpose groups comprised of some 50 personnel, however, were noted in the pipeline moving toward South Vietnam. Since the 15 June "second" ceasefire, more than 7,000 North Vietnamese personnel--some three-quarters of whom were combat troops--have been detected starting the infiltration journey southward. Since the original ceasefire was implemented on 27 January, over 57,000 personnel have moved through the infiltration system. Of these, more than 32,000 started the trek after 27 January, while about 25,000 were in the pipeline moving southward as of that date. (ANNEX B, for U.S. eyes only, contains a more detailed discussion of the information pertaining to infiltration which was received during the past week.)

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2. Recent information indicates that a major redeployment of logistic units from South Vietnam to Laos is underway. The 32nd and 33rd Transportation Regiments, which have been actively involved in moving supplies to Communist forces in northern GVN Military Region (MR)-1, were ordered to begin moving back to Laos on 7 September. This redeployment provides further evidence that the Communists intend to move a large volume of supplies through south Laos within the next few months. Besides these regiments, three other transportation regiments within South Vietnam were ordered to redeploy, but no specific destinations were given. These units, however, are probably in the process of expanding their area of responsibility to cover the sections vacated by the 32nd and 33rd Regiments.

3. In another redeployment, the Headquarters of the 271st NVA Independent Regiment and its subordinate 9th Battalion completed a move from southern GVN MR-3 to Quang Duc Province in MR-2 in early September. The 271st Regiment was located in late June within Hau Nghia Province near the Cambodian border. Since that time, elements of the regiment have been identified moving north through Cambodia to the Bu Prang area of Quang Duc Province. The regiment's 7th Battalion, however, remains located in Hau Nghia Province of MR-3 while the 8th Battalion is currently unlocated. The deployment of elements of the regiment may presage an attempt to drive ARVN units out of the Bu Prang area--necessary if the western supply corridor is to be extended through southern MR-2 to northern MR-3.

4. During the reporting period, evidence was received that the 260th North Vietnamese Antiaircraft Regiment had recently deployed south from the Hanoi area and was now in the process of moving into northern South Vietnam. The unit reportedly is scheduled to replace the 245th Antiaircraft Regiment which has been in Khe Sanh area of Quang Tri Province since March. The new area of operations for the 245th is unknown. Because the unit recently completed intensified ground combat and artillery training for

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Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

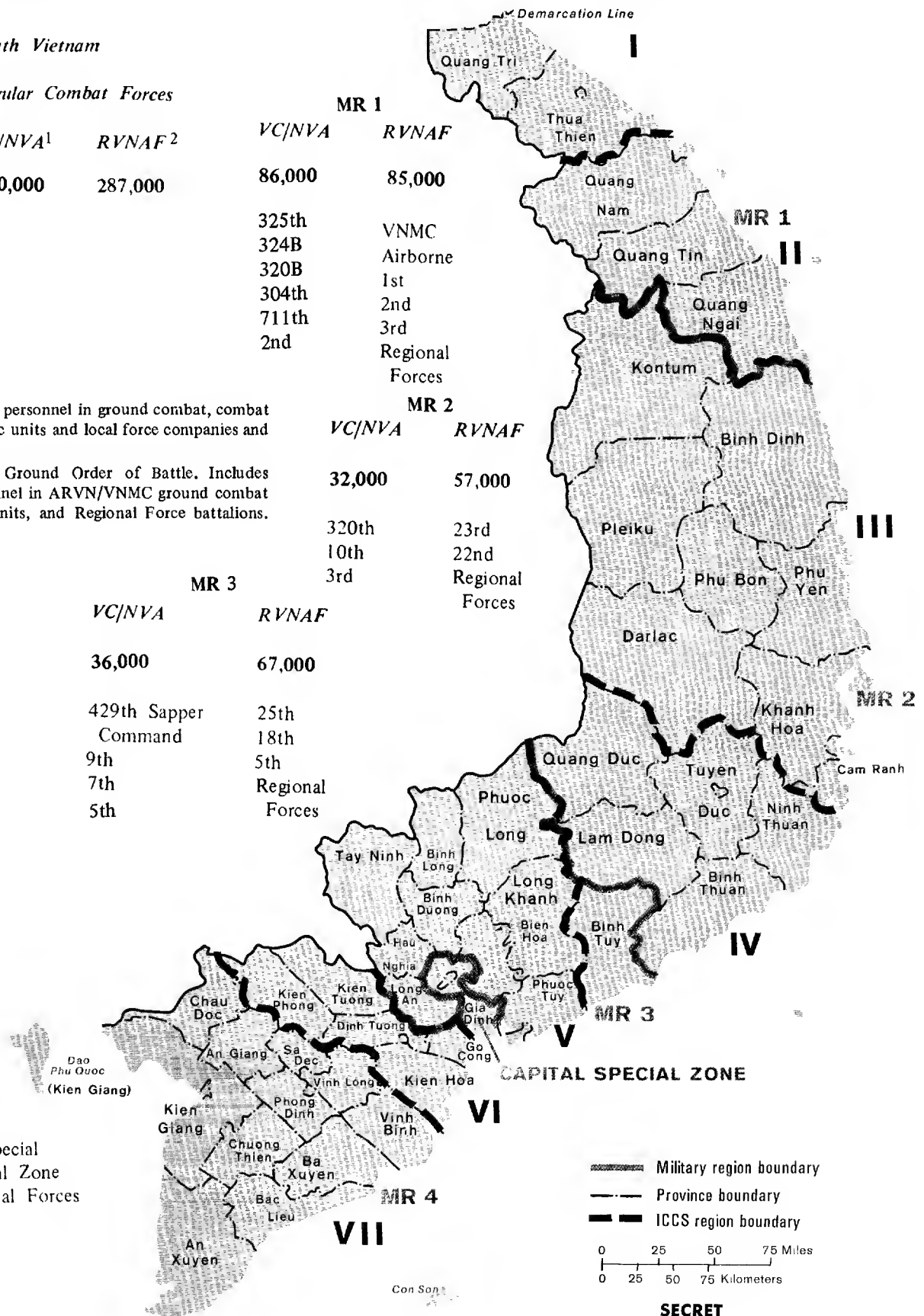
VC/NVA ¹	RVNAF ²	VC/NVA	RVNAF
180,000	287,000	86,000	85,000
325th 324B 320B 304th 711th 2nd	VNMC Airborne 1st 2nd 3rd Regional Forces		

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. Revised RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes present for duty personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions.

VC/NVA	RVNAF
36,000	67,000
429th Sapper Command 9th 7th 5th	25th 18th 5th Regional Forces

VC/NVA	RVNAF
26,000	78,000
1st	21st 9th 7th 44th Special Tactical Zone Regional Forces



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a new unspecified mission, however, it could assume new air defense responsibilities elsewhere in South Vietnam or shift into southern Laos for the upcoming dry season.

B. Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies

North Vietnam

5. For the second consecutive week, heavy typhoon rains virtually halted supply movements in the North Vietnamese Panhandle. Numerous reports were received during the reporting period of roads being flooded or units being unable to deliver cargo because of the storms. For example, on 1 September a logistic unit was scheduled to deliver some 330 tons of cargo to the Ben Truc area south of Vinh, but because of the weather, the vehicles were unable to move over the tramway. Two days later on 3 September [REDACTED] parts of Route 1 in the Vinh area and as far north as Thanh Hoa were flooded, blocking vehicle movement.

25X1C

6. Further south, logistic units in Quang Binh Province were advised to transfer cargo to higher ground to preclude water damage, and preparations were made to disassemble the Xuan Son pontoon bridge if the water continued to rise. The only detected logistic activity in this area this week was limited to small, periodic cargo deliveries such as a 109 ton gasoline shipment from the Vinh area to Quang Binh Province. Typhoons are normal for this time of year in southern North Vietnam and will probably continue to impede logistics activity periodically at least through early November.

Laos

7. Although heavy rains again inhibited supply movements in Laos this week, there were some signs that the Communists are preparing for the upcoming dry season. A total of 50 miles of Route 7, the main supply corridor into northern Laos, was observed on 29 August from a point roughly 15 miles

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east of Ban Ban west to its junction with Routes 4 and 4/7 on the Plaine des Jarres. The roadbed was generally in fair condition, and some road clearing activity was taking place. Although large amounts of standing water were noted on the roadbed, Route 7 was in remarkably good condition for this late in the rainy season and was supporting light vehicular traffic on most of its segments. This activity probably will increase as the rains cease.

8. In southern Laos, most of the logistic activity noted this week was associated with road repair and local resupply. The Communists are, however, planning for increased supply movement early in the logistics dry season.

[REDACTED] a unit working on the new dual road system was ordered on 1 September to concentrate its efforts on widening the road in order to ensure the transportation effort during November. This report, together with the steady pace of road construction throughout the Panhandle and the deployment of units back to Laos, strongly suggests that the Communists again intend to mount a major transportation effort in Laos during the upcoming dry season.

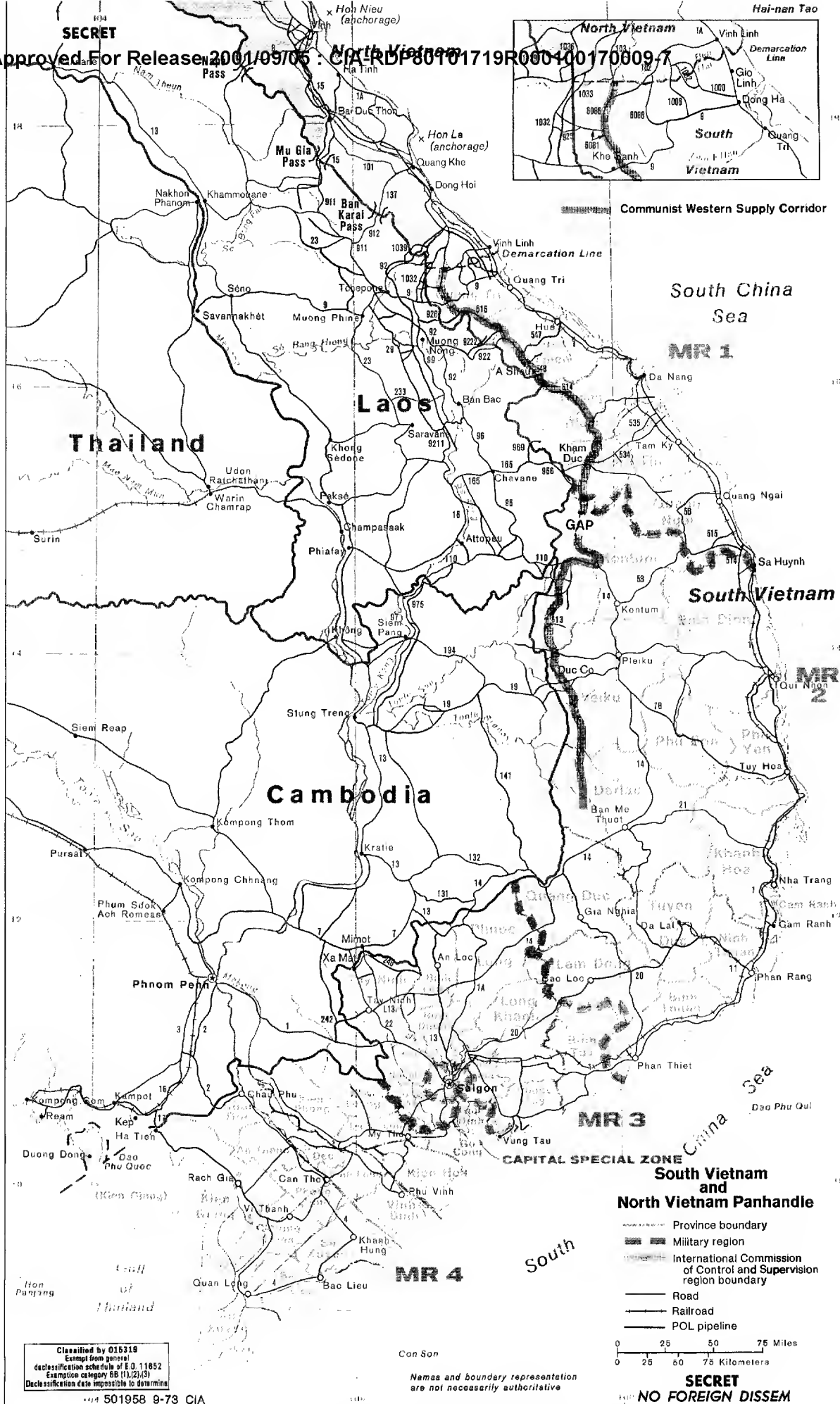
South Vietnam

9. Although there were several references to the weather hampering operations and units involved in road clearing operations, logistic activity in northern South Vietnam remained brisk. One source reported, for example, that on 3 September over 550 vehicles were active along the western supply corridor and that two days later on 5 September at least another 150 trucks, mostly carrying rice, were transiting this corridor.

10. Similar activity was noted in other areas of northern South Vietnam--specifically on Route 547 in Thua Thien Province, where some 200 trucks were active on 3 September. Besides these larger convoys, there were references to the movements in these areas of several smaller convoys with 20-30 trucks each.

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11. As in past weeks, only a small portion of the materiel detected moving was specifically identified. Most of what has been identified thus far, however, has been rice, fuel, and construction materiel, indicating that logistics units in this region are concentrating on routinely resupplying Communist forces as well as improving and maintaining the road network.

II. Communist-Initiated Combat Activity in South Vietnam and Laos

A. South Vietnam

12. In South Vietnam, the total number of communist-initiated ceasefire violations reported by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces since 27 January, 15 June, and for the last week (5-11 Sep) are shown below:

<u>Military Region</u>	<u>Total Since 27 January Ceasefire</u>		<u>Total Since 15 June Ceasefire</u>		<u>Last Week (5-11 Sep)</u>	
	Major	Minor	Major	Minor	Major	Minor
MR 1	1,245	4,327	220	968	28	114
MR 2	467	3,198	203	1,344	21	132
MR 3	528	3,741	126	1,165	3	69
MR 4	965	8,841	287	2,675	37	296
Totals	3,205	20,107	836	6,152	89 (110)	611 (530) <u>1/</u>

1/ Denotes totals of previous week.

13. Some of these violations may have been initiated by GVN forces rather than communist forces, and it is impossible in all cases to determine the actual instigator. The table above and the charts on the following pages, however, do show fairly accurately the trend in the amount of combat that has occurred in South Vietnam since the cease-fire. The

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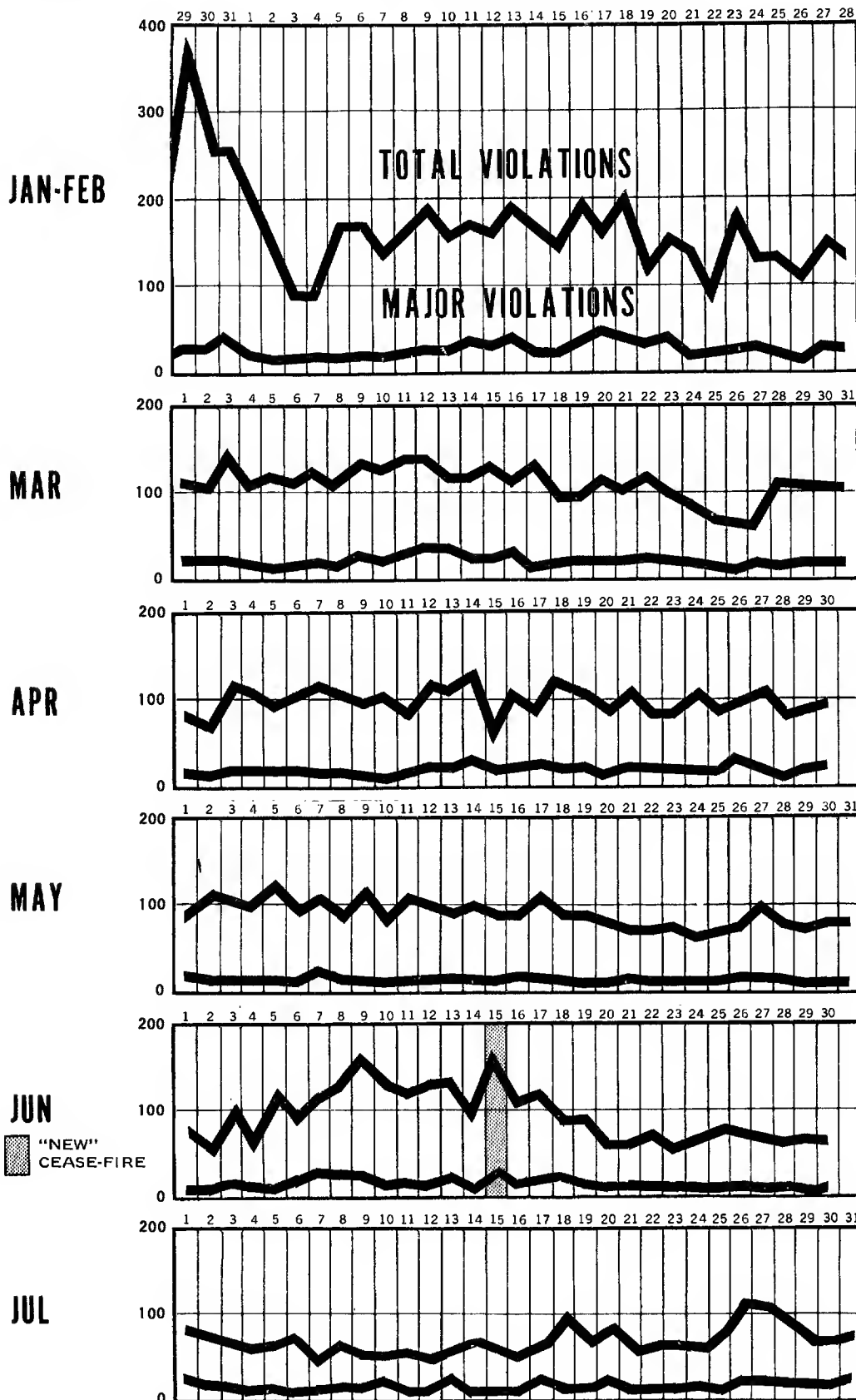
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CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS REPORTED BY RVNAF

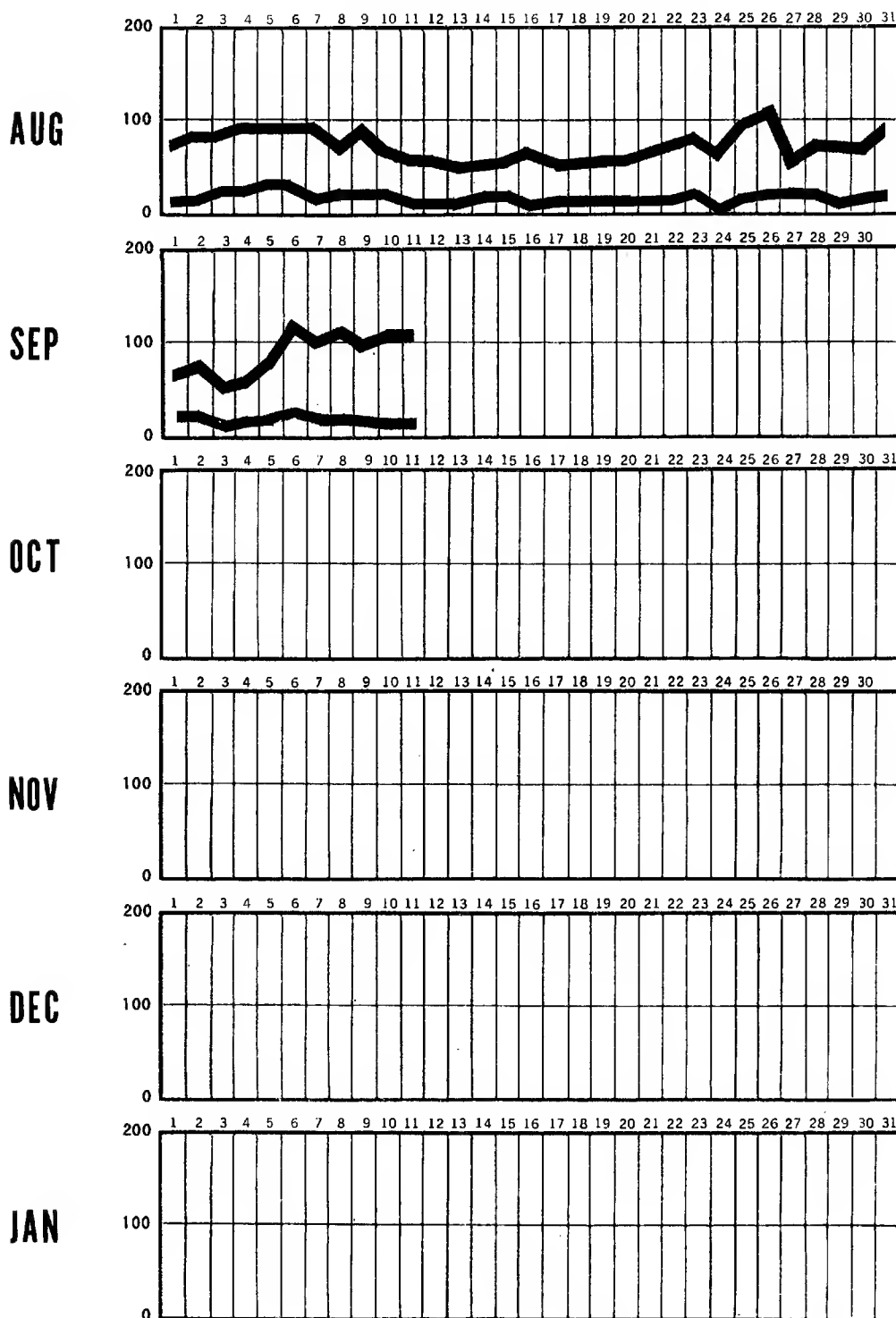
(28 JANUARY THROUGH 31 JULY 1973)



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(1 AUGUST 1973 TO THE PRESENT)



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fact that a combat incident occurred at a particular time and place is generally reported accurately by the South Vietnamese, even though the question of who started it may not always be treated in objective fashion.

B. Laos

14. Military activity in Laos continued at a low level during the past week.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina

A. North Vietnam: Fall Induction Phase

15. North Vietnamese military conscription increased during August as the fall induction phase got underway.

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25X1D1a
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NSA 25X3

the August message total does suggest that recruiting has been higher than during the spring induction campaign. Moreover, press reporting on conscription has resumed--albeit on a more limited basis than in previous years--after virtually no coverage on the subject during the spring and early summer.

16. Although it is too early to evaluate the magnitude of August enlistments, this year's fall induction phase is particularly significant because any North Vietnamese military plans for early 1974 will be at least partially keyed to the size of the induction phase. A large increase in the numbers of inductees--which would be strongly suggested if the September message volume is also high--would provide the North Vietnamese with a larger base of trained military manpower for possible future infiltration. Allowing for a normal training cycle of 3 to 4 months, plus infiltration time, the fall class, if dispatched south, could be available for commitment within the southern war zones in the early spring of next year.

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B. NVA Apparently to Withdraw from Southwestern Cambodia

17. The fragile accord reached in mid-August by the Khmer Communists (KC) and the NVA in an attempt to end the fighting in Kampot and Takeo province was apparently accompanied by provisions for the withdrawal of NVA elements from other areas of the Southwest region.* Implementation of these provisions is being hampered by NVA intransigence. Although some units from the northern part of the region are apparently pulling out, territorial disputes and scattered fighting continue between the two allies in Kampot and Takeo. In addition, NVA elements reportedly have refused to evacuate Koh Kong Province.

18. It is not known what effect the withdrawal agreement in the southwest is having on NVA units in other regions of Cambodia. A 20 August KC message indicated that NVA units in a portion of Kandal Province were included under the terms of the agreement, but specific references from other KC controlled areas have not been observed. In any event, it is unlikely that the North Vietnamese will allow the KC to extend their control over the supply lines in the northeast or base areas along the South Vietnamese border which are vital to the VC/NVA effort in South Vietnam.

* KC Southwestern Region is composed of Kampot, Takeo, Koh Kong, Kompong Speu, and Kompong Chhnang provinces.

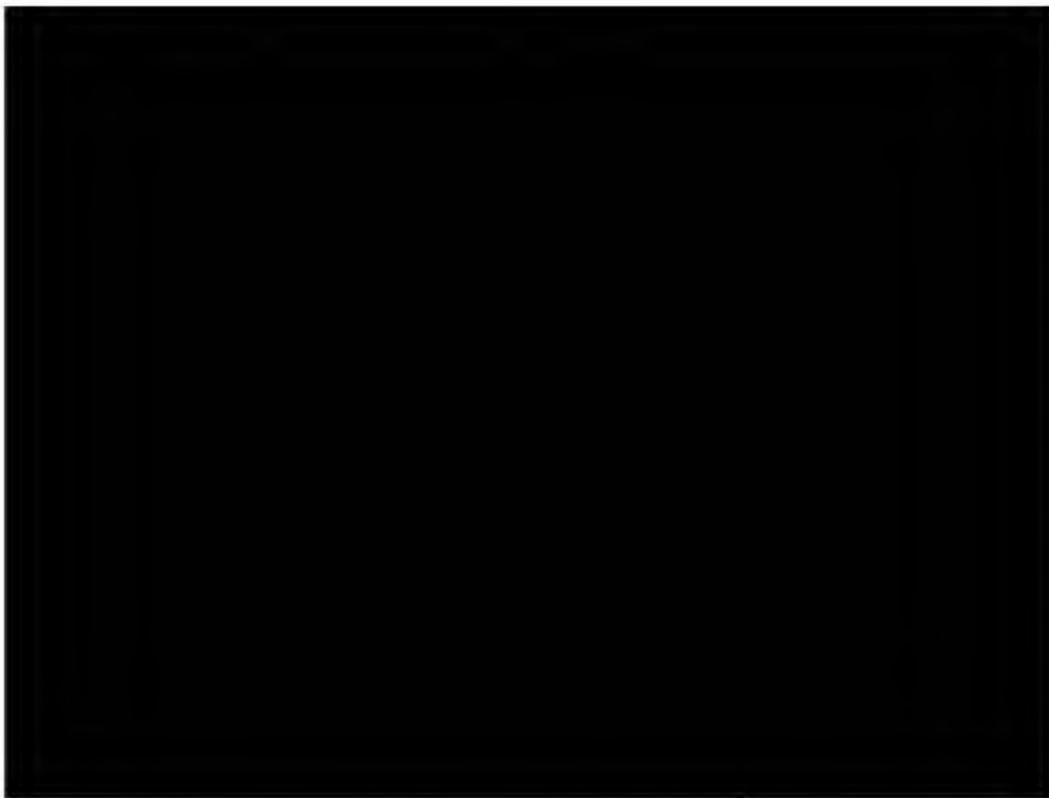
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ANNEX A

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NSA 25X3



Paragraphs 12 through 14: These paragraphs, which list reports of Communist-initiated fighting inside South Vietnam and Laos in violation of the ceasefire, [REDACTED]

25X9

25X9
25X9

[REDACTED] In the case of South Vietnam, they are almost exclusively derived from reporting of the South Vietnamese armed forces and may be subject to the biases inherent in RVNAF reporting at the present time. In the case of Laos, most of the reporting on combat violations comes from Laos Government commanders who pass the information to American officials at the Military Region Headquarters level. In any case, there is no particular security problem associated with using the information in these paragraphs in discussions with the North Vietnamese.

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ANNEX B

Post-Ceasefire Infiltration of North Vietnamese
Personnel to the South

Only two special-purpose infiltration groups were detected entering the pipeline north of Vinh during the past week. These groups, which have an estimated total strength of about 50 persons, are traveling to MR Tri-Thien-Hue in northern MR-1. Table 1, below, summarizes the southward movement of all North Vietnamese--including specialists--by month since January 1973.

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Table 1

Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973

	<u>Total^{1/}</u>	<u>Special-Purpose</u>
January	20,000	1,600
February	10,200	2,100
March	3,250	2,250
April	1,925	1,200
May	7,175	300
June	2,200	700
July	3,650	600
August	2,200	700
September 1-4	0	0
September 5-11	50	50

^{1/} Including gap-filled groups, except groups 7001-7009 and 5057. Assuming that these groups departed after 1 January, about 5,000 combat troops would be added to the infiltration starts shown above.

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